



CONGRESSMAN HENRY A. WAXMAN NEWS

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"WAXMAN BRINGS GRIM REPORT FROM U.S.S.R."

Congressman Henry A. Waxman just returned from a ten-day congressional visit to the Soviet Union. Waxman chaired the delegation's Committee on Human Rights. One of the Committee's principal concerns was the current status of Soviet Jewry. Waxman compared current circumstances to those he encountered five years ago on a similar trip.

"There has been substantial deterioration in every area of life for Soviet Jews. The Jews with whom we met were universally aware that emigration has come to a virtual standstill. Though some cling to hopes of leaving the Soviet Union, others believe that the emigration situation will not improve in the foreseeable future."

According to Waxman, Soviet Jews are "terrified" by the recent development of an official government-sponsored Anti-Zionist Committee. This Committee, composed of prominent Soviet Jews, is being used by the regime to promulgate anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda.

"The Jewish community fears that similar committees will be set up all over the Soviet Union and, on the institutional level, within factories, universities, etc. For older people, the Anti-Zionist Committee brings back terrible memories of the Stanlinist years during which Jews were systematically exploited for state propaganda purposes."

If the impressions of the congressional committee are accurate, Jews--especially those who have hope of emigrating to Israel--are more interested than ever in the Hebrew language and traditional religious observances.

Waxman concluded that the United States must substantially increase human rights pressure on the Soviet Union if the plight of Jews is to improve.

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